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to the pendulum through some principle perfect in itself, and not dependent for its success on superior execution. In the escapement invented by him, the pendulum merely raises a weight, and is impelled by that weight through an increased space in its descent. It neither unlocks a detent, nor has anything to do with the train; and as the weight raised, and the spaces described, are constant quantities, this escapement is, in the strict meaning of the term, one of equal impulse.

May 7, 1840.

JOHN WM. LUBBOCK, Esq., M.A., V.P. and Treasurer, in the Chair.

John Auldjo, Esq., and William Sharp, Esq., were balloted for, and duly elected into the Society.

A paper was read, entitled "Researches in Embryology, Third Series: a Contribution to the Physiology of Cells." By Martin Barry, M.D., F.R.S., F.R.S.E., Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh.

In the second series of these researches, the author had traced certain changes in the mammiferous ovum consequent on fecundation. The object of his present communication is to describe their further appearances obtained by the application of higher magnifying powers; and to make known a remarkable process of development thus discovered. In order to obtain more exact results, his observations were still made on the same animal as before, namely, the rabbit, in the expectation that, if his labours were successful, it would be comparatively easy to trace the changes in other mammals. By pursuing the method of obtaining and preserving ova from the Fallopian tube which he recommended in his last paper, he has been enabled to find and examine 137 more of these delicate objects; and has thus had ample opportunity of confirming the principal facts therein stated. He has now procured in all 230 ova from the Fallopian tube. But being aware that repeated observations alone do not suffice in researches of this nature, unless extended to the very earliest stages, he again specially directed his attention to the ovum while it is still within the ovary, with a view to discover its state at the moment of fecundation, as well as immediately before and after that event.

The almost universal supposition, that the Purkinjian or germinal vesicle is the essential portion of the ovum, has been realized in these investigations; but in a manner not anticipated by any of the numerous conjectures which have been published. The germinal vesicle becomes filled with cells, and these again become filled with the foundations of other cells; so that the vesicle is thus rendered almost opaque. The mode in which this change takes place is the

following, and it is one which, if confirmed by future observation, must modify the views recently advanced on the mode of origin, the nature, the properties, and the destination of the nucleus in the physiology of cells. It is known that the germinal spot presents, in some instances, a dark point in its centre. The author finds that such a point is invariably present at a certain period; that it enlarges, and is then found to contain a cavity filled with fluid, which is exceedingly pellucid. The outer portion of the spot resolves itself into cells; and the foundations of other cells come into view in its interior, arranged in layers around the central cavity; the outer layers being pushed forth by the continual origin of new cells in the interior. The latter commence as dark globules in the pellucid fluid of the central cavity. Every other nucleus met with in these researches has seemed to be the seat of changes essentially the same. The appearance of the central portion of the nucleus is, from the above process, continually varying; and the author believes that the nature of the nucleolus of Schleiden is to be thus explained. The germinal vesicle, enlarged and flattened, becomes filled with the objects arising from the changes in its spot; and the interior of each of the objects filling it, into which the eye can penetrate, presents a repetition of the process above described. The central portion of the altered spot, with its pellucid cavity, remains at that part of the germinal vesicle which is directed towards the surface of the ovum, and towards the surface of the ovary. At the corresponding part, the thick transparent membrane of the ovum in some instances appears to have become attenuated, in others also cleft. Subsequently, the central portion of the altered spot passes to the centre of the germinal vesicle; the germinal vesicle, regaining its spherical form, returns to the centre of the ovum, and a fissure in the thick transparent membrane is no longer seen. From these successive changes it may be inferred that fecundation has taken place; and this by the introduction of some substance into the germinal vesicle from the exterior of the ovary. It may also be inferred, that the central portion of the altered germinal spot is the point of fecundation. In further proof that such really is the case, there arise at this part two cells, which constitute the foundation of the new being. These two cells enlarge, and imbibe the fluid of those around them, which are at first pushed further out by the two central cells, and subsequently disappear by liquefaction. The contents of the germinal vesicle thus enter into the formation of two cells. The membrane of the germinal vesicle then disappears by liquefaction.

Each of the succeeding twin cells presents a nucleus, which, having first passed to the centre of its cell, resolves itself into cells in the manner above described. By this means the twin cells, in their turn, become filled with other cells. Only two of these in each twin cell being destined to continue, the others, as well as the membrane of each parent-cell, disappear by liquefaction, when four cells remain. These four produce eight, and so on, until the germ consists of a mulberry-like object, the cells of which do not admit

of being counted. Nor does the mode of propagation continue the same with reference to number only. The process inherited from the germinal vesicle by its twin offspring, reappears in the progeny of these. Every cell, whatever its minuteness, if its interior can be discerned, is found filled with the foundations of new cells, into which its nucleus has been resolved. Together with a doubling of the number of the cells, there occurs also a diminution of their size. The cells are at first elliptical, and become globular.

The above mode of augmentation, namely the origin of cells in cells, appears by no means to be limited to the period in question. Thus it is very common to meet with several varieties of epithelium-cells in the oviduct, including those which carry cilia, filled with cells; but the whole embryo at a subsequent period is composed of cells filled with the foundations of other cells.

In the second series of these researches, it was shown that the mulberry-like object above mentioned, is found to contain a cell larger than the rest, elliptical in form, and having in its centre a thick-walled hollow sphere, which is the nucleus of this cell. It was further shown that this nucleus is the rudimental embryo. From what has been just stated, it appears, that the same process, by which a nucleus in one instance transforms itself into the embryo, is in operation in another instance, where the product does not extend beyond the interior of a minute and transitory cell. Making allowance, indeed, for a difference in form and size, the description given of the one might be applied to the other. It was shown in the second series, that in the production of the embryo out of a nucleus, layer after layer of cells come into view in the interior, while layers previously formed are pushed further out; each of the layers being so distinctly circumscribed as to appear almost membranous at its surface. The same membranous appearance presents itself at the surface of the several layers of a nucleus in many situations. Farther, in the formation of the embryo, a pellucid centre is the point around which new layers of cells continually come into view; a centre corresponding to that giving origin to similar appearances in every nucleus described in the present memoir. It was shown that in the embryo this mysterious centre is present until it has assumed the form of the cavity, including the sinus rhomboidalis, in the central portion of the nervous system.

The process above described as giving origin to the new being in the mammiferous ovum, is no doubt universal. The author thinks that there is evidence of its occurrence in the ova of batrachian Reptiles, some osseous Fishes, and certain of the Mollusca; though the explanation given of these has been of a very different character. It has hitherto been usual to regard the round white spot, or cicatricula, on the yelk of the bird's laid egg, as an altered state of the discus vitellinus in the unfecundated ovarian ovum. So far from thinking that such is the case, the author believes the whole substance of the cicatricula in the laid egg to have its origin within the germinal vesicle, in the same manner as in the ovum of Mammalia.

There is no fixed relation between the degree of development of

ova, and their size, locality, or age. The variation with regard to size is referable chiefly to a difference in the quantity of fluid imbibed in different instances by the incipient chorion. Vesicles filled with transparent fluid are frequently met with in the Fallopian tube, very much resembling the thick transparent membrane of the ovarian ovum. These vesicles are probably unimpregnated ova, in the course of being absorbed. The so-called "yelk" in the more or less mature ovarian ovum, consists of nuclei in the transition state and exhibiting the compound structure above described. The mass of these becomes circumscribed by a proper membrane. They and their membrane subsequently disappear by liquefaction, and are succeeded by a new set, arising in the interior, and likewise becoming circumscribed by a proper membrane, and so on. This explains why some observers have never seen a membrane in this situation. After the fecundation of the ovum, the cells of the tunica granulosa, that is, part of the so-called "disc," are found to have become club-shaped, greatly elongated, filled in some instances with cells, and connected with the thick transparent membrane by their pointed extremities alone.

That the thin membrane described by the author in his second series as rising from the thick transparent membrane in the Fallopian tube, and imbibing fluid, is really the incipient chorion, was then shown by tracing it from stage to stage, up to the period when villi form upon it. There remained, however, two questions undecided; viz., whether the chorion is formed of cells, and if so, whether the cells are those of the so-called "disc," brought by the ovum from the ovary. The author now states that the chorion is formed of cells, which gradually collect around the thick transparent membrane, and coalesce; and that the cells in question are *not* those of the "disc" brought with the ovum from the ovary. The cells which give origin to the chorion are intended to be more particularly described in a future paper.

The existing view, namely, that a nucleus, when it leaves the membrane of its cell, simply disappears by liquefaction, is inapplicable to any nucleus observed in the course of these investigations. The nucleus resolves itself into incipient cells in the manner above described. In tracing this process, it appears that the nucleus, and especially its central pellucid cavity, is the seat of changes which were not to have been expected from the recently advanced doctrine, that the disappearing nucleus has performed its entire office by giving origin at its surface to the membrane of a single cell. It is the mysterious centre of a nucleus which is the point of fecundation; and the place of origin of two cells constituting the foundation of the new being. The germinal vesicle, as already stated, is the parent cell, which, having given origin to two cells, disappears, each of its successors giving origin to other two, and so on. Perpetuation, however, at this period, consists, not merely in the origin of cells in cells, but in the origin of cells in the pellucid central part of what had been the nucleus of cells.

The author shows that neither the germinal vesicle, nor the pel-

lucid object in the epithelium-cell, is a cytoblast. He suggests, that the cells into which, according to his observations, the nucleus becomes resolved, may enter into the formation of secondary deposits—for instance, spiral fibres; and that they may contribute to the thickening which takes place, in some instances, in the cell-membrane.

The germ of certain plants passes through states so much resembling those occurring in the germ of mammiferous animals, that it is not easy to consider them as resulting either from a different fundamental form, or from a process of development which even in its details is not the same as what has been above described; the fundamental form in question in Mammalia—and therefore it may be presumed of Man himself—being that which is permanent in the simplest plants,—the single isolated cell.

A paper was also read, entitled “On the Odour accompanying Electricity, and on the probability of its dependence on the presence of a new substance;” by C. F. Schœnbein, Professor of Chemistry, Bâle, communicated in a letter to Michael Faraday, Esq., D.C.L., F.R.S., &c.

The author's attention having been long directed to the remarkable fact, that odour, resembling that of phosphorus, is given off during the escape of positive electricity from the point of a conductor into air; and is likewise perceptible when lightning has struck any object, and also when water is electrolyzed, he has investigated the circumstances attending these phenomena; and the results he has obtained will, he expects, afford a clue to the discovery of their cause.

The odour which accompanies the electrolyzation of water, he observes, is only disengaged at the positive electrode. He also finds that the odoriferous principle can be preserved in well-closed glass bottles for any length of time. The only metals which yield this odour are gold and platina; but dilute sulphuric, phosphoric, and nitric acids, and from aqueous solutions of several of the salts, also disengage it. Raising the temperature of the fluid to the boiling point prevents the odour from arising; and the addition of comparatively small quantities of powdered charcoal, iron, zinc, tin, lead, antimony, bismuth or arsenic, or of a few drops of mercury, to the odorous principle contained in a bottle, immediately destroys the smell; and the same happens when platina or gold, heated red hot, is introduced into the vessel containing that volatile substance.

May 14, 1840.

MAJOR EDWARD SABINE, R.A. V.P., in the Chair.

A paper was read, entitled, “Tables of the Variation, through a cycle of nine years, of the mean height of the Barometer, mean Temperature, and depth of Rain, as connected with the prevailing